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Although I fully agree with the conclusion which we unanimously reached after the 15 March meeting, i.e. that we would be happy to pursue either the original "E" Plan or the last created "Z" plan, I have decided after cogitation that I prefer the latter. In addition to the reasons listed in Jack Hawkins' presentation, I would add the following as being of importance.

1. An unopposed landing has tremendous benefits particularly for unbleeded troops and even more so for unbleeded Latin troops. An initial setback or indeed serious initial difficulties might be just enough to break an inexperienced outfit of this type even though well trained. On the other hand, the morale uplift from getting their feet firmly set on Cuban soil and from establishing a beach head without serious initial problems or losses could make real tigers out of them.

2. Another enormous advantage is the simplicity of defense. The few and narrow access routes should be easily maintained against highly superior troops almost indefinitely. This might not be so if the opposition had air, but it would be hoped that any opposing air would be eliminated reasonably soon.

3. Granting that break-out will not be easy, there is conversely the benefit of not having to rush due to the easy defensibility mentioned above. Consequently, there should be complete freedom of choice with regard to timing and if the beach head were to be maintained for sometime, there is the possible advantage of recognition of a provisional government with subsequent U.S. material support. Such recognition, however, is not a requirement of the plan.

4. The advantage of having a usable air strip is enormous. Even though a limited number of aircraft should be based on it (say, two) still the time over target for planes so based would be so long as to permit extensive ranging over any part or parts of the island on each mission. Such air support will, in my opinion, do more than anything to bring out opposition elements wherever they may exist.

5. Control of the air plus tanks plus the other heavy firepower held by the strike force should be a combination that would make break-out comparatively simple.

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In addition to the foregoing, sea supply should be easy to manage.

In addition to the above points, it would be extremely helpful, in my opinion, if we could cover the following points in some way:

1. Air cover for the strike force shipping as it approaches Cuba. Granted that it is unlikely that the Cubans would attack such shipping in international waters prior to their having taken any affirmative act themselves, still air cover could be very comforting. Possibly, the USAF or the U.S. Navy would be willing to do this.
2. U.S. air fields should be selected and ready to receive aircraft post-strike in order to avoid, insofar as possible, return of aircraft to Latin America. The security problem here is significant particularly as support at a later date for allegations against the U.S. Nevertheless if, as suggested by the State Department, this is acceptable politically, we should certainly take advantage of it.
3. The U.S. should be poised and ready to fly in massive supplies as soon as recognition of a provisional government occurs, provided of course that this has received political clearance. Again, however, I understand that the State Department has no objection <sup>such</sup> to support under such circumstances.
4. Any reserve Cuban force, even though slightly trained, should be included in our plan for use as the circumstances may require, i.e., either to supplement the forces in the beach-head or to support possible uprisings elsewhere on the Island or, conceivably, as a surprise element to coordinate with a break-out.
5. A few small teams will presumably be held in reserve in order to be available for infiltration at appropriate points in support of internal opposition and to provide additional communication facilities.

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